

Things Around the Museum: How Did that 53 Foot Container Get to the WPRR Museum?

- Peter Baumhefner

No, it didn't fall off of one of the many UPRR intermodal trains that passed through Portola between 2000 and 2010. Actually, it arrived at the museum through the thoughts and acts of a number of caring members of the organization who made known the need to a second home "neighbor" in the area.

Every museum needs extra capacity to store things inside and out of the elements of weather. That need at the WPRR Museum became apparent in 2008 through conversation with members and engineers Craig Simmons and Jack Zygnier. Craig and Jack knew their neighbor, in what was then known as Gold Mountain, worked for Pacer Stacktrain. In casual conversation with Pete Baumhefner on a day Pete was occupying his home in Gold Mountain, Jack mentioned the museum was looking for a used container. Pete was Executive Vice President of Operations of Pacer Stacktrain at the time and knew Pacer was in the process of retiring a number of its older 53' containers as new containers came on line. Pete has always had a passion for railroading and for societies that work hard to maintain the historical significance of railroads that no longer exist today and was delighted to learn of an opportunity to help the WPRR Museum.

Pete talked to the Equipment Team at Pacer Stacktrain and found a suitable used 53' container that was slated to be retired in the near future after making nearly a thousand trips across the United States carrying goods we all use. He also worked with some of Pacer's drayage partners to determine capability of moving the container from the Bay Area to Portola. A plan and time frame were developed to deliver the container to the WPRR Museum.

It wasn't long after the planning stages that the container was picked up near Oakland and drayed up to Portola and delivered to the museum where it was quickly put to good use.

Pete subsequently retired from Pacer Stacktrain in 2010 and actually moved to Gold Mountain full time

in 2019 and lived there through May, 2021 when he moved to Southern California. He's been by the donated container a number of times in his visits to the museum and perhaps some of the items he's donated have found a place in the container until they reach the business floor of the museum.

Moral of the story: Whenever you are made aware of a need, communicate it, because you never know what connections you will make for the benefit of the organization that has the need!

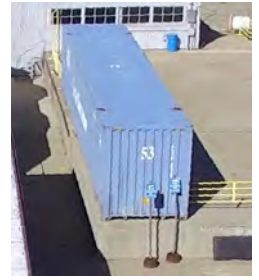


Photo by Robbie Campbell



Photo by Greg Elems 2/9/2022